

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

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A NEW *MICROSOREX* FROM THE VICINITY OF  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

BY EDWARD A. PREBLE.

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On April 25, 1903, while searching for salamanders in company with W. H. Osgood and W. P. Hay on the Virginia shore of the Potomac above Plunmer's Island, I dislodged from the decayed interior of a large fallen log a tiny shrew. The rarity of any species of long-tailed shrew in the vicinity of Washington caused me to take special pains in preserving the specimen. Later, when I examined it carefully, I was surprised to find that it belonged to the genus *Microsorex*, hitherto unknown to occur south of Ohio and New York. It was apparent that the specimen represented an undescribed form, but its characterization was deferred in the hope that other specimens would be detected. This did not occur until January 24 of the present year, when William Fink of Berwyn, Maryland, found a second specimen in the decayed heart of a dead chestnut tree, which he cut from a dry hillside at some distance from water. He presented it to the U. S. National Museum, and owing to the courtesy of the curator of mammals it has been loaned to me for study. Unfortunately the condition of the specimen at the time it reached the museum precluded its being made into a skin, and it was put into alcohol. Consequently it is not possible to describe the color of the winter pelage. It was carefully measured while in the flesh, however, and the skull was removed. Since it agrees closely in measurements and skull characters with the original specimen, there remains no doubt as to the advisability of describing the species, which may be known as

***Microsorex winnemana* sp. nov.**

*Type* from Fairfax County (bank of Potomac River near Stubblefield Falls), Virginia. No. 126,320 U. S. National Museum, Biological Survey

Collection. ♀ young adult, skin and skull. Collected by Edward A. Preble, April 25, 1903.

*General characters.*—Similar to *Microsorex hoyi*, but considerably smaller; braincase proportionally higher and more rounded.

*Color.*—Upperparts grayish brown, slightly tinged about head and face with ochraceous; lowerparts ashy-gray, the line of demarcation being quite distinct; tail bicolor, the upper surface like the back, the lower silvery gray. The type is apparently in summer pelage, and the hair is much shorter than that of the Berwyn specimen, taken in winter.

*Cranial and dental characters.*—Compared with skulls of *Microsorex hoyi* from Elk River, Minnesota, assumed to be typical, the skull of *Microsorex winnemana* is decidedly smaller; the braincase more rounded and relatively higher; the rostrum proportionally shorter and lighter, and in consequence the teeth much crowded, the minute third unicuspid being detected with difficulty. The teeth do not differ essentially in shape from those of *Microsorex hoyi*.

*Measurements.*—Type measured in flesh: Total length, 78; tail vertebrae, 28; hind foot, 9 (in *M. hoyi* 10 to 10.5 mm.). The specimen from Berwyn, Maryland, measured: 86; 29; 9.5. Skull of type: Greatest length, 13.8; breadth of braincase, 6. Skulls of *M. hoyi* measured approximately 15.5 by 7 mm.

*Remarks.*—*Microsorex winnemana* is the smallest species of shrew (and therefore the smallest mammal) thus far discovered in America. The specific name *winnemana* (beautiful island) is in allusion to Plummer's Island, the home of the Washington Biologists' Field Club, near which the type specimen was taken.

While comparing the Berwyn specimen Gerrit S. Miller, Jr., and Ned Hollister brought to light a peculiar situation regarding the supposed type of *Microsorex hoyi*. Baird in his original description of *Sorex hoyi* (Rep. Exp. & Sur. R. R. Pac. VIII, p. 32, 1857) described and listed two specimens, both from Racine, Wisconsin, an alcoholic (No. 1688), with skull *in situ*, and a skin with its skull (No.  $\frac{632}{1783}$ ). In his plate (Pl. XXVIII) he figures the alcoholic (No. 1688), and a skull without number) which would naturally be assumed to belong to the alcoholic. Lyon and Osgood (Bull. 62, U. S. Nat. Mus. p. 244, 1909), regard No. 1688 as the type. Miller and Hollister, however, inform me that No. 1688 is an undoubted *Sorex personatus*, as shown by the skull, which has never been removed but has been partially bared to expose the teeth. Since the skull figured by Baird does not belong to No. 1688, it is fair to presume that it represents his other specimen, No. 1783. It is plain that this skull, which is still in the U. S. National Museum, should be regarded as the type of *Sorex hoyi* Baird, and it is so considered by Miller and Hollister.